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AUTOBIOGRAPHIC NOTE. *From an old "remembrance copy."*

Was born May 31, 1819, in my father's farm-house, at West Hills, L. I., New York State. My parents' folks mostly farmers and sailors—on my father's side, of English—on my mother's, (Van Velsor's), from Hollandic immigration. There was, first and last, a large family of children; (I was the second.) We moved to Brooklyn while I was still a little one in frocks—and there in B. I grew up out of the frocks—then, as child and boy, went to the public schools—then to work in a printing office.

When only sixteen or seventeen years old, and for two years afterward, I went to teaching country schools down in Queens and Suffolk counties, Long Island, and "boarded round." Then, returning to New York, worked as printer and writer, (with an occasional shy at "poetry.")

1848-'9.—About this time went off on a leisurely journey and working expedition (my brother Jeff with me,) through all the Middle States, and down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Lived a while in New Orleans, and worked there. (Have lived quite a good deal in the Southern States.) After a time, plodded back northward, up the Mississippi, the Missouri, &c., and around to, and by way of, the great lakes, Michigan, Huron and Erie, to Niagara Falls and lower Canada—finally returning through Central New York, and down the Hudson.

1851-'54.—Occupied in house-building in Brooklyn. (For a little of the first part of that time in printing a daily and weekly paper.)

1855.—Lost my dear father, this year, by death. . . . Commenced putting *Leaves of Grass* to press, for good—after many MS. doings and undoings—(I had great trouble in leaving out the stock "poetical" touches—but succeeded at last.)

1862.—In December of this year went down to the field of War in Virginia. My brother George reported badly wounded in the Fredericksburgh fight. (For 1863 and '64, see *Specimen Days*.)

1865 to '71.—Had a place as clerk (till well on in '73) in the Attorney General's Office, Washington.

(New York and Brooklyn seem more like *home*, as I was born near, and brought up in them, and lived, man and boy, for 30 years. But I lived some years in Washington, and have visited, and partially lived, in most of the Western and Eastern cities.)

1873.—This year lost, by death, my dear, dear mother—and, just before, my sister Martha—(the two best and sweetest women I have ever seen or known, or ever expect to see.)

Same year, a sudden climax and prostration from paralysis. Had been simmering inside for several years; broke out during those times temporarily and then went over. But now a serious attack, beyond cure. Dr. Drinkard, my Washington physician, (and a first-rate one,) said it was the result of too extreme bodily and emotional strain continued at Washington and "down in front," in 1863, '4 and '5. I doubt if a heartier, stronger, healthier physique ever lived, from 1840 to '70. My greatest call (Quaker) to go around and do what I could among the suffering and sick and wounded was that I seem'd to be *so strong and well*. (I considered myself invulnerable.) Quit work at Washington, and moved to Camden, New Jersey—where I have lived since, and now, (September, 1889,) write these lines.

(A long stretch of illness, or half-illness, with some lulls. During these latter, have revised and printed over all my books—bro't out "November Boughs"—and at intervals travelled to the Prairie States, the Rocky Mountains, Canada, to New York, to my birthplace in Long Island, and to Boston. But physical disability and the war-paralysis above alluded to have settled upon me more and more, the last year or so.)

W. W.

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